Dramatic Censorship and the Children of the Blackfriars, 1603-1608

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Introduction

In early modern England there were several apparatuses of censorship that imposed legal limitations on the language that could be printed or performed. During Elizabeth's reign, the state expected that all books would be authorized, before printing, by an ecclesiastical official to ensure that they contained no heretical or seditious material. In the 1580s, the Archbishop of Canterbury established a board of licensers to approve books for the Stationers' Company, and this board lasted until about 1603, when other clergymen, not all of them connected to the Archbishop of Canterbury or to the Bishop of London, took over (Clegg 27-29, 63). Not even a majority of books seems to have received ecclesiastical authorization, and the Archbishop's licensers used their powers of censorship infrequently. James I expanded the pre-print authorization system by granting more officials the power to authorize texts, and during his reign the Stationers' Register records the names of authorizers more frequently than before. Parliament passed statutes defining the seditious and treasonous language that could not be legally printed, and the crown issued proclamations that ordered for the suppression of offensive texts (ibid. 32-36). Dramatic censorship was rather less complicated than press censorship, as it mainly involved the perusal of the Master of the Revels. Of course, when plays were printed, they were sometimes re-licensed by another official, so press censorship is somewhat related. Occasionally, as with press censorship, the monarch or the Privy Council would intervene in exceptional cases of controversial dramatic performance.

This study will examine a case study in the dramatic censorship of early modern England. Toward the beginning of James I's reign, the acting company known as the Children of the Blackfriars, or, from 1604 until 1606, the Children of the Queen's Revels, put on several

performances that resulted in the punishment of actors and playwrights by royal authorities, culminating in the brief closure of all London theaters in 1608. The company was established in 1600, when Henry Evans rented the Blackfriars Theater and convinced the Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal at Windsor to use his authority to take children as choristers to instead take children as actors for the new company (Munro 15-17). This practice of forcing children into a role not included in the Master's royal patent proved to be controversial, but the company nevertheless found some success at court. In February of 1604, James's consort, Anna of Denmark, began to patronize the company, but, within the next three years, the company ran into several difficulties and lost the queen's patronage in 1606. Scholars tend to associate the company's loss of patronage with the provocative performances that got playwrights and actors in trouble with the king or the Privy Council, but there is no clear evidence that links these together. After James briefly forbade dramatic performances in 1608 and the plague took its toll on the company's personnel, the company lost possession of the Blackfriars Theater but did not shut down entirely. While the King's Men acquired the Blackfriars, the Children moved into the Whitefriars Theater when the theaters reopened in 1609 and were even granted a new royal patent the following year. The company again found success at court. After another short-lived change of location, the company seems to have collapsed in 1616.

The company is known for having performed a relatively audacious repertoire of satirical comedies, a trend demonstrated by its participation in the "War of the Theaters," in which several playwrights satirized each other's style and personality across multiple plays. This generalization might lead one to expect that the company would frequently run afoul of its satirical targets, especially since many of the comedies feature dukes or kings and their corrupt

courts. A passage from Thomas Heywood's *An Apology for Actors* illustrates boys' companies' reputation for defamatory satire:

> Now to speake of some abuse lately crept into the quality, as an inueighing against the State, the Court, the Law, the Citty, and their gouernements, with the particularizing of priuate mens humors (yet aliue) Noble-men, & others. I know it distastes many; neither do I any way approue it, nor dare I by any meanes excuse it. The liberty which some arrogate to themselues, committing their bitternesse, and liberall inuectiues against all estates, to the mouthes of Children, supposing their iuniority to be a priuiledge for any rayling be it neuer so violent, I could aduise all such, to curbe and limit this presumed liberty within the bands of discretion and gouernment. (Heywood)

Heywood contends that playwrights took advantage of their actors' youth to censure their legal institutions with impunity. Whether or not the playwrights actually intended to use the boy actors in this way, this passage notes that a common source of dramatic controversy was the depiction of "private men." However, the controversies that faced the Children of the Blackfriars tended to involve the alleged portrayal of government officials. As we shall see, several plays in the company's repertoire contain what might be called "inueighing against the State, the Court, the Law, the Citty, and their gouernements," but James or the Privy Council only took action against them for commenting on particular issues or members of court.

Based on playwrights' strategies to avoid censorship and our usual expectations about what kind of literature is likely to offend members of a ruling class, it would seem that daring satire would put a playing company at the greatest risk of punishment. Yet, while several notable cases of dramatic censorship seem to bear out this assumption, a careful examination of plays

that were censored or objected to and plays that were, despite their satirical content, apparently not objected to in such a way that they prompted an official response demonstrates that the usual grounds for censorship or official retaliation against an offending playing company were more complicated than this.

The abundant warnings against "misapplication" in the prefatory materials that accompany playwrights' published versions of their works attest to a common fear of libel accusations or, perhaps, arbitrary punishments inflicted by royal authorities. It is difficult to evaluate the ingenuousness of these warnings. On the one hand, the satirical representations of political authorities in the company's repertoire are often so generalized that, even if they were intended to be caricatures of specific individuals, they are unrecognizable. Indeed, playwrights frequently argued that their satire was directed at human folly in general and not at specific individuals. But, on the other hand, for example, when John Day in *The Isle of Gulls* adds to his source material by making his duke character a ridiculous lover of hunting, it is hard not to read that detail as a gibe at James I, whose penchant for hunting was well known. As we shall see, there is strong evidence that some playwrights' claims of universality for their satire were insincere, and many plays allude to topical issues.

In the 1980s and '90s, a group of historicist critics of Renaissance drama turned their attention to the censorship that played a key role in shaping the texts they studied. Annabel Patterson was one of the earlier critics to note the crucial influence of censorship in the composition and interpretation of early modern texts, including but not limited to dramatic ones. In *Censorship and Interpretation*, she lays out certain hermeneutical principles that ought to be taken into account when studying texts that were shaped by early modern England's systems of

censorship. These principles acknowledge that writers limited and concealed references to topical issues in order to avoid punishment. Writers often molded readers' expectations with disclaimers of topicality, such as the preliminary material often found in printed editions of plays, so that readers came to anticipate the very relevance to current events that writers vehemently denied. Other critics have built on Patterson's work in an attempt to historicize it further. They sought to reevaluate the assumptions older critics made about censorship and investigate early modern perspectives on it.

The usual understanding of censorship places censor and artist in direct opposition with each other. The artist produces a text, and the censor, almost always a government official, alters or reduces it before the text can reach the public. The censor deletes parts of a text and silences the artist in any passages he considers unacceptable, thereby restricting the artist's freedom to publish on certain topics. The censor and the poet are seen as fundamentally at odds with one another. According to some revisionist critics, this perspective on censorship does not properly apply to the early modern period and can mislead anyone who tries to interpret historical evidence of censorship. From this point of view, it is hard to make sense of the fact, for example, that poets John Lyly and Ben Jonson (a frequent target of royal censors) eagerly sought the reversion of the office of Master of the Revels, or that the major poetic response to the 1599 Bishop's Ban on satires and epigrams, the so-called *Whipper Pamphlets*, generally approved the ban. The prevailing modern liberal perspective on censorship would understand the Master of the Revels as a limiter of free speech, something that writers, especially satirical ones, are supposed to cherish. But free speech, in the way we understand it today, as a legal right, did not really exist as a subject of discourse in the early modern period. The protagonist of Marston's *The Fawn*, the

Duke Hercules, may seem to belie this claim, since he contends that the free speech of the satirist helps princes achieve self-knowledge. Of course, "free" in this context means "frank" or "unreserved," yet Hercules makes it clear that a government would benefit from allowing critical speech rather than censoring it. But even he draws a line between permissible and impermissible speech: he soliloquizes, "Freeness, *so't grow not to licentiousness*, / Is grateful to just states" (Marston 1.2.331-332, my italics). Thus, an appropriate way of thinking about censorship in this period must recognize that the overwhelming majority of writers and other artists at the time accepted or endorsed censorship as necessary for the maintenance of common civility. Writers did not debate whether or not state censorship should exist; instead, they made arguments about what ought or ought not to be censored.

According to Debora Shuger, it was common for early modern English writers to justify censorship with appeals to civility and charity. Citing Martin Ingram, she points out that "church courts treated defamation as a violation of 'harmony and charity within the Christian community,'" and not as something that propagates falsehood (Shuger 98). For many, the problem with satire was not that it spread misinformation or that it criticized government policy, but that it insulted people and tarnished their reputation among the public. In general, the attitude of a good Christian toward others' faults was supposed to be marked by forgiveness, not rancor. However, the same argument could easily be used by writers who were accused of tarnishing others' reputations; they could object that their accusers were uncharitably distorting the meaning of their works. For censors and censored writers, then, the decision to censor a text or performance was not only based in communal values but also had to be weighed against consequences that might conflict with those values.

Richard Burt has questioned modern assumptions about the definition of censorship in his examination of Jonson's relationship with early modern censorship. By defining censorship as "a differentiation between legitimate and illegitimate discourses" (Burt xi), Burt emphasizes its function during the early modern period. When poets such as Jonson complained about the censorship of their works, they did not exclusively focus on the government's efforts to suppress or alter controversial passages. They also regarded public opinion and the criticism of other learned writers as sources of literary legitimation and delegitimation. One of Burt's most important points is that literary criticism constituted a powerful form of censorship in early modern England because it differentiated between literary and nonliterary discourses and influenced what was published and performed. Nor did poets only complain about censorship; they might also try to wield it for their own benefit, which helps to explain why Jonson would want the reversion of the office of the Master of the Revels. There was not as sharply defined an opposition between literary writers and the state as one might expect. As a result of this, early modern censorship did not have an exclusively repressive function. Its function might be more accurately characterized as discriminating, in ways that were sometimes repressive, to be sure, but sometimes productive of new criticism or even literature that aimed to define literary good taste.

Some critics have centered their attention on the Master of the Revels as a censor who exemplifies the complexity of censorship in early modern England. Understanding the role of the Master of the Revels is important here because nearly all the plays performed by the Children of the Blackfriars, including those that provoked a response from royal authorities, seem to have been approved either by him or some other qualified authority. There is one significant

difference between the licensing process for the Children of the Blackfriars' repertoire and that of every other major acting company in London: in 1604, when Queen Anne began to patronize the company, she appointed Samuel Daniel as Master of the Queen's Revels to approve its plays, whereas every other company submitted its plays to Master of the Revels Edmund Tilney for licensing (Clare 122). Daniel seems to have been somehow involved in the company beforehand (Munro 19-20). This unusual licensing arrangement quickly becomes uncertain because, as early as 1605, a letter written by George Chapman seems to imply that the Lord Chamberlain, not Daniel, was responsible for licensing the Children of the Queen's Revels' performances. Several scholars speculate that Daniel lost his position after facing controversy around his 1605 play *Philotas*. The fact that, by early 1606, the queen stopped patronizing the company, may support their point. However, the evidence is ultimately inconclusive. If Daniel retained the capacity to license the company's plays for performance for some time after the *Philotas* controversy, he failed to protect the company from scandal and royal punishments. If he lost his position, there may have been confusion within the company with regard to licensing, and this may have contributed to the company's subsequent embroilment in controversy.

In late Elizabethan and Jacobean London, before almost every dramatic performance of a new play, the Master of the Revels screened the text of the play and observed the actors in a dress rehearsal to ensure that the performance would be suitable for its audience, whether that audience consisted of public theatergoers or members of the royal court. The position began during the reign of Henry VII as a way of organizing court festivities, including masques and other dramatic performances, and its occupant acted as a deputy to the Lord Chamberlain, who was ultimately in charge of court entertainments. Starting in 1574, the Master of the Revels

became increasingly involved in commercial theater productions, as new acting companies were granted royal patents to stage performances in the city as long as the plays were approved by him. Eventually, the office's purview expanded to include all the major acting companies in London.

The criteria by which the Master of the Revels was to censor dramatic texts was never specified in any document, and scholars' assessment of these criteria have therefore been mostly inferential. George Buck, who held the position from 1610 until 1622, wrote a commentary on the Art of the Revels, but it is lost. The available evidence suggests that ideological considerations were not a factor in dramatic censorship, as most instances of known censorship concern passages that seemed to refer to living members of court or to have some other topical application that was considered dangerous. Older critics interpreted the Revels office as a repressive means of stifling criticism of the state, but more recent ones, who might be called historical revisionists, have argued that the Master of the Revels and Renaissance censorship in general cannot be understood only in modern terms of repressiveness and permissiveness. The old model, which reflects the usual modern way of understanding censorship, viewed royal authorities as restricting the free speech of playwrights who sought to challenge or satirize their policies. Beginning in the 1980s, scholars began to point out the limitations of this model for describing the censorship that occurred in early modern England. Nowadays, historians recognize that the relationship between the Master of the Revels and the playwrights and actors was one characterized more by negotiation than by repression.

For example, Richard Dutton argues that the Master of the Revels served to protect acting companies from London city authorities who sought to curb the disturbances of the peace that

inevitably accompanied theatrical performances. The Common Council of London also objected to the lewdness and seditious themes of many theatrical entertainments (Dutton 29). In 1574, when the Earl of Leicester's Men received a royal patent to put on plays in London, it was established for the first time that an acting company mounting public performances would have its plays seen and allowed by the Master of the Revels, who previously oversaw only court entertainments (ibid. 28). This decision helped to protect acting companies because, if the queen, through a representative, approved a theatrical performance, it would be difficult for city authorities to contradict her approval. Most dramatic entrepreneurs still built their theaters just outside the city council's jurisdiction to avoid its interference. Thus, the Master of the Revels did not by intention act as an agent of repressive censorship, but rather constituted a defensive measure by which the acting companies acquired royal legitimacy.

Yet it is also helpful here to note how the Master of the Revels protected acting companies from the royal court as well as London city authorities. By editing playtexts and ensuring that actors performed their roles decorously, the Master of the Revels ostensibly helped acting companies avoid offending the monarch or noblemen who could petition the authorities to respond with punitive measures. The cases studied here constitute failures of the licensing process to prevent the performance of offensive speeches, scenes, and even entire plays. Following Dutton, we might understand the frequency with which plays of the Children of the Queen's Revels caused a scandal as a failure of the Revels office to vet plays effectively. The Master of the Revels was apparently never blamed for missing provocative material; state punishments targeted actors and playwrights. Evidence of playwrights' responses to state accusations suggests that suspected playwrights sometimes invoked the Master of the Revels'

authority in attempts to defend themselves. It is unclear whether this argument swayed state authorities, but I have not seen any indication that it helped the playwrights.

This analysis will not delve far into theoretical discussions of censorship, but it is important to note here that the government was not seen as the sole agent of censorship in the early modern period. As Burt persuasively argues, the market too served as a censor, as did other poets, whose learned judgments enabled them to censure literary texts with much credibility. However, royal government in early modern England had several powers of censorship that other censors lacked (Burt acknowledges this). Among these were the authority to imprison dramatists and actors, the infliction of corporal punishment, and the ability to close theaters arbitrarily. Though the Master of the Revels played perhaps the dominant role in state censorship of drama, on several occasions James I exercised extensive power over the London acting companies to punish speech he considered unacceptable. The lack of definite rules in the dramatic licensing procedure potentially left every play vulnerable to the scrutiny of government officials, who did not always agree with the Master of the Revels' censorship decisions. James would likely not have viewed his role in censoring drama as comparable to the Master of the Revels' screening practices. Though earlier historians perhaps overstate the case for the presence of repressive state censorship in early modern England, James' responses to certain plays performed by the Children of the Blackfriars reveal that his acts of censorship can be characterized as generally repressive. But this claim needs to be qualified, as James' punishments of playwrights and actors were always rather quickly revoked or mitigated. The body of this essay will examine in detail the kinds of censorship imposed on actors, playwrights, and dramatic texts associated with the

Children of the Blackfriars, with an emphasis on censorship that resulted from controversial performances.

More than an analysis of censorship, this is an analysis of the complex interactions between the royal English court and a London playing company. It is also an investigation of early modern interpretive practices. Even if we lack documentation that explains censors' exact motives for taking issue with certain plays, we can make educated guesses about their concerns based on the available evidence. At different times, censors concentrated on certain topical references and not others, suggesting that some subjects were viewed as more offensive or dangerous than others in light of contemporary circumstances.

Over the last four decades, scholars have recognized the importance of topical meaning in early modern English drama and have amply explained the need to historicize censorship when studying it in past cultures. But I think that, with regard to state censorship, more work is required to understand, as far as the available evidence will allow, what James I and other top members of the English court were thinking when they interfered with performances or imprisoned dramatists. Historical evidence, as well as the differences between censored and apparently uncensored plays, provide clues about what motivated these censors. When scholars discuss James' reasons for responding so severely to plays like *Eastward Ho*, they sometimes make vague claims about the king's anger, as if his irascibility were a sufficient explanation for his intervention. I suspect his reasons were more complicated and related to his political concerns than that. Specifically, I mean he approached censorship thinking about international relations and his political allies' reputations, both of which could be adversely affected by dramatic controversies. He viewed the drama through a politician's lens, considering the

ramifications of dramatic speeches that could be labeled as seditious. The Children of the Blackfriars' close connections with the English court would have made him and other officials quite sensitive to any criticisms of royal policy in their plays. Even though the king was ultimately responsible for most of the acts of censorship against the company, other people were involved in these decisions, directly or indirectly.

It is clear that not every target of satirical drama was beyond the pale for English government authorities. Both *The Fawn* and *The Isle of Gulls* portray dukes with conspicuous similarities to James, yet there is no evidence that *The Fawn* caused any offense, and the actors in *The Isle of Gulls* seem to have been imprisoned for other reasons (discussed below). Another frequent target of satire is the group of Scottish social climbers who bought their knightly status from James. *The Fleer* and *Eastward Ho* ridicule these men as parvenus, implicitly satirizing James' policy of selling knighthoods, yet *The Fleer* seems not to have provoked a punitive response from the king, and the playwrights of *Eastward Ho* were incarcerated for specific instances of anti-Scottish satire, not for deriding one of James' "thirty-pound knights." If James were simply incensed by any satire against him or his followers, he and his informers would have had to overlook many plays for there to exist these and other instances of non-censorship. It seems that much political satire was in fact tolerated and did not simply go unnoticed. The French ambassador to England implies as much in a 1604 letter: "Consider for pity's sake what must be the state and condition of a prince, [...] whom the comedians of the metropolis bring upon the stage, whose wife attends these representations in order to enjoy the laugh against her husband" (Clare 138). Some critics have speculated that this passage refers to a performance of *The Fawn* in June of that year. A close examination of censored and uncensored content is

necessary to distinguish what authorities viewed as dangerous or inappropriate for public performance from what they allowed to be represented on stage, even if it was derisive.

When James' political concerns and those of other members of the English court are considered in relation to each instance of dramatic censorship, a better understanding of their motives is made possible. Most pieces of evidence have to be taken with skepticism, since dramatic censors almost never provided explicit reasons for their censorship. But the specific political context has to be taken into account for each act of censorship in order to move beyond the perspective that views personal anger as the main reason for censorship. Of course, personal affronts cannot be discounted here, since slander on a public stage could be seen as a serious threat to someone's reputation, and the expectation of civility was a significant aspect of the way early modern English authorities approached politics. But political concerns largely determined what constituted a threat to someone's reputation, and these have not been sufficiently investigated with regard to the censorship of the plays of the Children of the Blackfriars.

The claim that each individual instance of dramatic censorship needs to be understood in its specific political context does not imply that acts of censorship did not derive from common aims. In the cases of censorship examined here, all censors acted in such a way as to protect their own political interests. In his response to dramatic satire, James perhaps viewed explicitly anti-Scottish passages as undermining his attempt to unite England and Scotland with malicious and misleading statements. Diplomatic considerations also factored into his censorship decisions. Other top members of the English court, perhaps concerned for their positions, seem to have been quite cautious about possible topical applications of what was performed on stage. In what follows I will assess the implications of passages that scholars have identified as potentially

controversial to the English government, adding several others that have been discussed less. I will argue that James and other government censors, besides the Master of the Revels, censored Blackfriars plays for political reasons that have not been fully appreciated.

Satirical Comedies

The most distinctly Jacobean target of dramatic satire in the early years of James' reign was the influx of Scottish courtiers who accompanied the new king to London. The prodigality with which James rewarded his followers disturbed many English observers, who feared that the proposed political union of Scotland and England would lead James to waste even more money on ambitious Scots. Closely related to this concern was James' sale of knighthoods, which broke with Elizabeth's practices of granting knighthoods for military service or to those whose lands produced much revenue. According to Lawrence Stone, by December 1604, James had nearly tripled the number of knights in England (Stone 74). Not all of these new knights had bought their honors, but by focusing on the practice of selling knighthoods dramatists could imply that the honor was being prostituted. This topical form of satire appears in several plays performed by the Children of the Blackfriars. Multiple comedies feature new knights who present themselves as far more wealthy than they really are. Mockery of these characters is frequently accompanied by gibes against the Scots. New members of the English court, especially James, would have had good reason to feel insulted by these jokes, but it seems that James only took action when the plays calumniated the Scots. I claim that his acts of censorship are related to his sensitivity about opposition to his plan for a political union of England and Scotland.

James' plan of union met with much opposition, and the controversy it caused resulted in some heated incidents. In February 1607, MP Christopher Pigott interrupted proceedings in the House of Commons by launching into a tirade against the Scots. The content of his diatribe seems not to have been recorded, but the Journal of the House of Commons attests to the disruptiveness of the speech. It notes that Pigott, during a parliamentary debate, declared his opinion that certain "Remembrances" concerning the union should be read all at once. The House requested that he stand to speak, as called for by parliamentary convention,

> [w]hereupon he arose, and pretending at the first to deliver some Reasons why he pressed the Reading of the Remembrances generally, he afterwards entered into By-matter of Invective against the Scotts and Scottish Nation, using many Words of Scandal and Obloquy, ill beseeming such an Audience, not pertinent to the Matter in hand, and very unseasonable for the Time and Occasion, as after was conceived. (*Journal of the House of Commons* 333)

James learned of the speech through one of the Gentlemen of his Bedchamber (Galloway 104-105). An order was given that Pigott be imprisoned in the Tower of London, and James reminded the Privy Council that he himself was a Scot and that he loved the Scots. The Scots Council thanked him for his conduct. Even if James' actions in this case may have unintentionally hardened opposition to the union, they demonstrate that he tried to suppress, at least in public forums, anti-union arguments based in anti-Scots prejudice. Certainly, James took personal offense at Pigott's defamatory words about the Scots, but I suspect that he responded the way he did also to maintain the trust of the Scottish government, as Galloway claims (ibid. 105).

In a March 1607 speech to Parliament, James responded to opponents of union, and the arguments he rebuts reflect prevalent fears about James' partiality toward Scots. He describes two ways in which his opponents misjudge his intentions. First, they believe that, if England and Scotland are united, "England will then bee ouerwhelmed by the swarming of the Scots, who if the Vnion were effected, would raigne and rule all" (*His Maiesties speech* C3v). Secondly, they fear James' "profuse liberalitie to the Scottish men more then the English, and that with this Vnion all things shalbe giuen to them, and you [the members of Parliament] turned out of all" (ibid. C3v). James did not have to use much effort to refute the first, ridiculous argument, but he acknowledged that he was empowered, as monarch, to promote whomever he wished: "three parts, wherein I might hurt this Nation, by partialitie to the Scots, […] do absolutely lie in my hands and power, for either in disposition of rents, or whatsoever benefit, or in the preferring of them to any dignitie or office, ciuill or Eccesiasticall, or in calling them to the Parliament, it doeth all fully and onely lie within the compasse of my Prerogatiue" (ibid. E3r-E3v). He states his intention thenceforth to limit his preferments, but this concession makes dramatists' focus on the king's undue promotion of Scottish courtiers, viewed by many as favoritism, understandable.

At one point in his speech, he mentions Pigott's name as a byword for "seditious and discontented particular persons, as must be in all Common-wealths, that where they dare, may peradventure talke lewdly enough" (*His Majesties Speech* F2v). In this passage, James observes that not only Englishmen but also many Scots oppose the union and that some of them even talk like Pigott. In this way he makes a slight concession to English opponents of the union while at the same time emphasizing that the Scots do not plan on receiving undue benefits through the union. He then draws a distinction between the Scottish and the English opposition: "[the Scots]

offered alwayes to obey mee when it should come to them" (ibid. F2v). He elaborates on this distinction by comparing parliamentary protocol in the two countries. Whereas in Scotland's Parliament anyone who begins to speak seditiously is "straight interrupted and silenced by the Chauncellors authoritie," MPs in England may speak with liberty for as long as they like (ibid. F3r). Here James seems not to object principally to the content of Pigott's rant, but instead to the fact that this sort of speech was allowed in the House of Commons. Certainly, he labels the diatribe as sedition, a category of speech that was taken very seriously and understood as potentially leading to insurrection, but he focuses on the inappropriateness of the speech in Parliament. James clearly favors the Scottish parliamentary practice of enabling a chancellor to silence improper speech as soon as possible. I claim that the Pigott episode is instructive in considering the slightly earlier controversy of *Eastward Ho* because the play was censored for similar anti-Scottish invective. Perhaps James' punishment of the playwrights was motivated as much by a desire to show his Scottish subjects that he would not tolerate anti-Scottish insults on the stage as by personal offense. He likely also aimed to avoid the disapproval of the Scottish government, which could easily have received news of the play.

Certainly the most notorious case of royal retaliation against anti-Scottish dramatic satire is that of *Eastward Ho*, a city comedy coauthored by Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston in 1605. According to William Drummond's notes on conversations he had with Jonson, Jonson claimed that "he was delated by Sir James Murray to the king for writting something against the Scots in a play Eastward Hoe & voluntarly Imprissonned himself with Chapman and Marston, who had written it amongst them. the report was that they should then had their ears cutt & noses" (Dutton 172). Letters written by Chapman and Jonson that implore

their patrons for aid and the king for mercy shed more light on the situation. (Dutton suggests that these letters may refer to an otherwise unrecorded imprisonment resulting from controversy over *Sejanus*, as the letters do not mention Marston, but he and most other scholars accept that they most likely relate to the scandal caused by *Eastward Ho*. Marston may have fled the city (ibid. 172).) In a letter to James, Chapman explains that his and Jonson's "chief offences are but two clauses, and both of them not our own," implying either that Marston wrote the offending passages or that the actors inserted them (*Eastward Ho!* 126). From these letters, it is clear that the imprisonment was not voluntary. Jonson and Chapman implore their patrons for aid, claiming that their intentions in the play were misunderstood. Apparently, their strategy worked, since they escaped any physical punishment that may have been threatened and were soon released from prison. The influence of their patrons served to protect them from harsher royal punishment. This is one of several examples of James' forbearance in dealing with offending dramatists after threatening worse punishments. But this should not be attributed to any leniency on James' part; dramatists' connections with noblemen and members of court provided them with a way to negotiate lighter penalties. Dutton offers the example of Edward Dymock, who wrote a play that slandered the Earl of Lincoln, to demonstrate the consequences of lacking noble patrons as a dramatist (Dutton 185-186). Dymock was imprisoned and fined £1000, and the actors who performed his play were fined, pilloried, and whipped.

While the first published quarto of *Eastward Ho* may omit some offensive passages that were spoken in performance due to press censorship, the inclusion of a blatantly anti-Scottish passage in two surviving copies of the play exemplify the kind of satire that likely resulted in the playwrights' brief imprisonment. The passage was cancelled in all other copies of the first

quarto, and subsequent editions omitted it. In act three, scene three, a group of characters discusses life in England's American colonies, to which they plan soon to set sail. Captain Seagull, listing Virginia's attractions, tells a fellow adventurer that "you shall live freely there, without sergeants, or courtiers, or lawyers, or intelligencers." Then he utters the cancelled lines: "[O]nly a few industrious Scots, perhaps, who indeed are dispersed over the face of the whole earth. But as for them, there are no greater friends to Englishmen and England, when they are out on't, in the world, than they are. And for my part, I would a hundred thousand of 'em were there; for we are all one countrymen now, ye know; and we should find ten times more comfort of them there than we do here" (Jonson et al. 3.3.36-45). The passage suggests that England would be better off without any Scots and boldly refers to Jame's attempt to unify Scotland and England. It seems to buy into senseless fears that Scots would swarm England once the union was effected. As mentioned above, James felt it necessary to address this delusion in a speech to parliament. Earlier in the same exchange, Seagull exaggerates the luxury of life in Virginia, claiming, for instance, that "all their dripping-pans and their chamber-pots are pure gold" (ibid. 3.3.25-26). Thus the excised passage also invokes the stereotype of Scottish greed.

Shortly afterwards, in the same speech, a passage has been altered from the original printed version. While explaining how simple it is to obtain preferment in Virginia, Seagull observes, "You may be an alderman there, and never be scavenger; you may be a nobleman, and never be a slave; you may come to preferment enough, and never be a pander; to riches and fortune enough, and have never the more villainy nor the less wit" (ibid. 3.3.47-51). The sense of the passage seems to be that raising one's social status requires self-abasement in London, where advancement is "preposterously mixed" (ibid. 3.3.46). This contrast between Virginia and

London suggests that nobles and high-ranking courtiers under the current regime earned their positions through slavishness and pandering. In all but two extant copies of the play, "nobleman" has been replaced with "any other officer," and a passage has been inserted to close the speech. The passage echoes an earlier one, in which another character, Sindefy, discusses the flattery needed to gain favor at court. Sindefy says "my worshipful rascal, the groom of [a hypothetical lord's] stool," can easily contradict the command of his lord because "he rules the roost" (ibid. 2.2.74-83). According to C. G. Petter, the groom of the king's bedchamber at this time, John Murray, was the brother of James Murray (*Eastward Ho!* 32n). C. G. Petter cites a few scholars who believe that this change of "nobleman" to "any other officer," along with the deletion of the anti-Scots passage and possibly some other omissions that were made before the first printing of the text, was made by the printer himself in order to eliminate dangerous material (ibid. xlii-xliii). But I suspect, considering Jonson's recollection of having been imprisoned specifically for "something against the Scots," that there may have been some input from a government authority in the deletion or alteration of these passages.

Though the motivations behind the apparent changes to the text of *Eastward Ho* are unclear, it appears that they focus only on particular passages that might offend the king or the nobility. Passages that express scorn for undeserving sycophants at court withstood the scrutiny of whoever edited the text of the play, even where they seem likely connected to the anti-Scottish satire. Sir Petronel Flash embodies the play's mockery of unworthy knights. James Murray, the man Jonson says informed against him, would have had reason to be insulted by the play's repeated gibes at newly created knights, since he was one himself (Clare 140). One passage that remains in all editions of the play seems hardly less controversial than the censored passages.

After the Virginia-bound ship capsizes in the Thames, Seagull and Petronel wash up on the Isle of Dogs and meet two gentlemen. The first thinks he recognizes Petronel and says, imitating James' Scottish accent, "I ken the man weel; he's one of my thirty-pound knights" (Jonson et al. 4.1.167-168). The passage alludes topically to the sale of titles instituted by James, which contributed to a significant increase in the size of the gentry during the early 17th century. The second gentleman corrects the first, saying, "No, no, this is he that stole his knighthood o' the grand day for four pound, giving to a page all the money in's purse, I wot well" (ibid. 4.1.169-171). According to Lawrence Stone, "the grand day" refers to James' coronation, at which 432 knights were dubbed at once (Stone 76). The second gentleman's correction implies that the page either recommended Flash to the king or sold his own title to Flash. The satirical argument of this exchange and Petronel's character in general is that the inflation of honors under James has debased the titles of the English gentry. Perhaps the fact that the first gentleman has to be corrected by the second suggests that James turns a blind eye to the corruption that goes on in his court. The fact that a page could sell a knighthood would have seemed ludicrous to members of the audience. It is surprising that this specific, unconcealed satirical moment was not censored even as the anti-Scottish gibe, mentioned above, was. Another way of understanding the passage is that it targets only corrupt courtiers and not James in particular, which would render it much less offensive. Even if James was ultimately responsible for creating new knights, the passage does not quite blame him for the allegedly undiscriminating distribution of honors.

The less-than-legitimate circumstances under which *Eastward Ho* was first performed may have contributed to its scandal. The play was probably produced in the spring of 1605, when James' court was in Greenwich, and the title alludes to the call of Thames boatmen who

transported would-be courtiers from London to Greenwich, situated east of London (*Eastward Ho!* xxiii). A letter from Chapman to the Lord Chamberlain suggests that the performance failed to obtain licensing. He wrote, "Of all the oversights for which I suffer none repents me so much as that our unhappy book was presented without your Lordship's allowance" (ibid. 126-127). It is unclear why the play should have been approved by the Lord Chamberlain, when Samuel Daniel was apparently in charge of licensing the plays of the Children of the Queen's Revels. It may be that Daniel had lost his position after the controversy over his play *Philotas*, discussed below, and that the Lord Chamberlain temporarily served in his capacity. Alternatively, the Lord Chamberlain, being in charge of the Revels Office, may have had equal authority to license plays, and Chapman wrote to him because he had more influence on the king. This is borne out by another letter he wrote to the Lord Chamberlain, which says that either Chapman or Jonson had been "remitted [...] wholly to your Lordship's favour" by the king (ibid. 127). As was seen in James' comments on Pigott's outburst, James greatly valued controls on speech, especially in arenas where speakers were expected to comply with certain standards of decorum. Of course, there were very different expectations for actors on stage and members of Parliament, but the fact that Jonson, Chapman, Marston, and the Children of the Queen's Revels failed to obey dramatic licensing procedures while the court was absent from London surely contributed to their offense.

So far, what we know about the censorship of *Eastward Ho* squares well with the view that the king and his courtiers sought to control and limit dramatic satire that ridiculed or challenged royal policy. The anti-Scottish elements of the play would have personally aggravated James, and, perhaps more importantly, infuriated the Scottish government had James

not moved to punish the dramatists. That a royally sponsored acting company was stoking anti-Scottish prejudice among the playgoing public at a time when James was trying to win support for his plan of union may have seemed to him detrimental to his political goals. The flouting of standard licensing procedure would have made the scandal even more outrageous and embarrassing for James. Yet the play's other satirical barbs (the mockery of knights who bought their titles, the suggestion that preferment is preposterous under James, and the imitation of James' accent for comedic effect) seem to have withstood the scrutiny of James and other officials. It is possible that Chapman understated the case when he noted that the play's "chief offences are but two clauses," but the available evidence suggests that the satire against the Scots and perhaps the nobility was what got the playwrights into trouble. In this way, the censorship of *Eastward Ho* well illustrates the apparent inconsistency of dramatic censorship in early modern England. (The play was even performed at court in 1614, and James was so pleased with it he paid the actors more than usual (Dutton 176).) It is tempting to attribute these inconsistencies to the negligence of the censors, but I think that anti-Scottish satire was James' main target and that the censorship of *Eastward Ho* is less inconsistent than many critics have thought. To an extent, anti-court satire was permitted or even appreciated by the English court, and punitive measures were only taken against the Children of the Blackfriars when their plays threatened to become political liabilities.

The other extant Blackfriars play that was censored for what may have been anti-Scottish satire is John Day's *The Isle of Gulls*. The title provocatively alludes to *The Isle of Dogs*, a 1597 play by Ben Jonson and Thomas Nashe that was suppressed by the Privy Council. As critics have noted, multiple aspects of *The Isle of Gulls* can be construed as ridiculing James and his

government, and these will be discussed below. The title page of the play names the acting company that performed it as "the Children of the Revels," indicating that the Blackfriars company had lost its royal patronage by the time the play was printed. However, it is uncertain whether this was precipitated by the scandal surrounding *The Isle of Gulls* or that surrounding *Eastward Ho*. The only other evidence of the state's response to the play comes from a letter from Sir Edward Hoby to Sir Thomas Edmondes, which says, "At this time was much speech of a play in the Black Friars, where, in the 'Isle of the Gulls', from the highest to the lowest, all men's parts were acted of two divers nations: as I understand sundry were committed to Bridewell" (Clare 147-148). The play, an adaptation of an episode from Sidney's *Arcadia*, does indeed feature characters from two different countries, Arcadia and Lacedaemon. But it is unclear why this detail should have caused any controversy, though the letter implies that it did. In the play, Duke Basilius of Arcadia issues a challenge to neighboring countries: if anyone can stealthily remove either of his two daughters from the closely guarded island to which he has removed his court, they earn his permission to marry her. In the end, two Lacedaemonians use their guile to outsmart two others and win the Duke's daughters' hands in marriage. While the comedic scenes feature plenty of satire aimed at the Duke's courtiers, none of it refers to the Scots or to upstart knights like *Eastward Ho* does. Given the available evidence, we can only speculate about what provoked a punitive response.

Basilius does resemble James in some ways. Clare points out that the text twice refers to the duchess character as "Queene" and attempts to rhyme "Duke" with "spring," suggesting that Basilius was originally intended to be a king and then had his title switched to duke at some point (Clare 146). It is worth noting that the name "Basilius" comes from the Greek word for

"king." Moreover, Day alters his source material by making Basilius an eager huntsman (ibid. 146). James' proclivity for hunting was well known. At one point Basilius promotes one of the Lacedaemonians to be an attendant for his daughters. While this could be understood as a portrayal of James' promotion of Scottish followers to high positions in the royal household, not much is made of it in the play. Finally, two of the disguised suitors to the duke's daughters are presented to the duke as "Lacedemonians, Subiectes to your Maiestie" (Day 267), whereupon they complain of various sorts of corruption and rebellion that allegedly occur in the duke's absence. The relationship between Arcadia and Lacedaemon is never fully explained, but here it is implied that the duke has authority over Lacedaemonians as well as Arcadians, which would considerably strengthen his identification with James, who ruled two countries. The suggestion that Basilius should return to his kingdom to control its state of disorder may echo James' opponents' denials of his right to succeed Elizabeth as English monarch. Compared to the explicit insult aimed at the Scots in *Eastward Ho*, these uncertain instances of topical satire seem vague and inoffensive. However, it is plausible that the actors inserted more topical references than are present in the printed text or imitated accents to make the comparison between Basilius and James more obvious. Also, offensive lines may have been cut from the printed text.

The main target of the play's satire is the courtier Dametas, who engages in bribery and other underhanded practices. Even the play's prologue, who denies that any "great mans life" is represented in the play, concedes that Dametas "expresses to the life the monstrous and deformed shape of vice" (ibid. 212). Among many other abuses of his office, he threatens to inform against a captain for a petty insult, demands bribes and perfect courtesy before letting anyone access the duke, steals from the duke, and plans to use violence against the duke to help

his friends kidnap the duke's daughters. Other characters compare him to "unnecessarie wormes" that "eate into the credite of true borne gentrie" (ibid. 226) and to a poisoned spring that infects "the whole bodie of the court with the leprosie of his couetousnesse" (ibid. 286). Equally corrupt is his cartoonishly evil scribe, Manasses, who not only takes bribes and steals, but also forges Dametas' signature, claims to "begger the whole Countrey" (ibid. 274) with his theft, and acknowledges the presence of atheists at court.

Despite scholars' attempts to identify Dametas with a real-life Jacobean courtier, there is little in his characterization to suggest that he portrays any specific person. His vices are general, and he most obviously functions as an elaborate representation of court corruption. But it is still possible to understand his character as an affront to the king's judgment, if Basilius' identification with James is accepted. Basilius turns a blind eye to all his abuses, whereas almost every other character criticizes him when he is out of earshot. Much of their contempt for Dametas centers on his ignoble origins; one of Basilius' daughters deems him "the very fall & garbidge of gentry" (ibid. 218). In this way, he resembles the sort of upstart courtier that was supposed to have flourished toward the beginning of James' reign. The play strongly implies that Basilius' negligence and susceptibility to flattery enable Dametas to abuse the powers of his office with impunity, so it cannot be ruled out that Dametas' character played a role in the controversy over the play. However, the admittedly limited evidence of Hoby's letter leads me to believe that, as with *Eastward Ho*, the perceived anti-Scottish satire of *The Isle of Gulls* was what crossed a line and not necessarily the more obvious depictions of court corruption that have seemed so potentially controversial to scholars.

One final example of anti-Scottish satire that provoked a royal response is a lost, anonymous play about Scottish gold mines, performed in 1608. (It was once believed that Marston authored this play, but this has since been refuted (Knowles).) The incident that this play triggered is closely connected to the scandal caused by the performance of Chapman's *Byron* plays, which will be discussed further on. Evidence for the play's existence comes from two letters: one from the French ambassador to England, Antoine Lefèvre de la Boderie, to the Marquis de Sillery, and another from Sir Thomas Lake to Robert Cecil. De la Boderie writes that the actors in the play "had slandered their King, his mine in Scotland and all his Favourites in a most pointed fashion; for having made him rail against heaven over the flight of a bird and have a gentleman beaten for calling off his dogs, they portrayed him as drunk at least once a day" (Dutton 182-183). Without the text of the play, these references remain obscure, but the mention of dogs perhaps suggests that the play lampooned James' penchant for hunting. Metallurgist Stephen Atkinson's *The discoverie and historie of the mynes in Scotland* suggests that many in England doubted the alleged bounty of the Scottish mines as a pipe dream. Atkinson, enthusiastic about the prospect of mining gold in Scotland, recounts how skeptics scoffed, "[W]here such riches be, the people of that countrey cannot be poore nor beggarly, as the Scots be" (Atkinson 9). According to Atkinson's account, James was closely involved in the ultimately abortive mining plans and even hatched a scheme to attract wealthy contractors. The head of the project was to seek out 24 gentlemen from England or Scotland to finance the enterprise, and James would reward them by dubbing each a "Knight of the Golden Mynes" (Atkinson 45). Apparently, the project failed when Robert Cecil shot it down. It is not unlikely that the satire derided the sale of knighthoods in connection with the mines or that it exploited the stereotype of

Scottish greed. Lake indicates that the play was performed by the Children of the Blackfriars: "His Majesty […] commanded me to signify to your lordship that for the others who have offended in the matter of the Mynes and other lewd words, which Is the children of the blackfriars, […] That his Grace had vowed they should never play more, but should first beg their bred and he would have his vow performed, And therefore my lord chamberlain by himself or your lordships at the table should take order to dissolve them, and to punish the maker besides" (Dutton 183). The *Byron* plays are also mentioned earlier in this letter. Both letters suggest that the *Byron* plays displeased James and Cecil, but that the satire about the mines was the last straw. James' attitude toward the offensive satire of the Children of the Blackfriars was likely exacerbated by their relatively long record of controversies (what are these "other lewd words"?), though we cannot know for sure if this was the case. Whatever James' reasons were, his response to the mines play was the harshest punishment ever imposed on the acting company. It would be interesting to find out whether this lost play was approved by the Master of the Revels or performed without a license.

At first glance, the state response to these three plays seems basically repressive, considering the arbitrary imprisonments of actors and dramatists. No punishment was carried out with much strictness, as Jonson and Chapman secured their release through the support of powerful patrons, and the 1608 closure of London theaters only lasted a few months, during which a plague swept London, perhaps causing the closure to last longer than it would have otherwise. Clearly, the state had a significant impact on published texts of the plays. At least a couple of passages from *Eastward Ho* were deleted, and the play about the Scottish mines was likely suppressed so that it could never be printed. Based on these three plays, we might say

about the reasons for state censorship of dramatic satire that gibes against Scots, along with some mocking portrayals of the king, were considered unacceptable and deserving of punishment but that criticism of the new regime's extravagance and prodigality with titles was permitted. However, this understanding is complicated when notable cases of non-censorship are examined.

Edward Sharpham's *The Fleer* is an imitation of John Marston's *The Malcontent*, but Sharpham has transplanted the setting from Italy to London, and the satire is much more topical. Like *Eastward Ho*, the play ridicules one of James' "thirty-pound knights," this one called Sir John Havelittle. As his name suggests, many of the jokes aimed at him express contempt for his poverty. However, unlike Petronel Flash, Havelittle is strongly implied to be Scottish. One character remarks that he "has the Scottish tongue very perfectly" (Sharpham 1.2.117), while another suggests that he send his sick mistress "an Oten cake, [...] a good Northern token" (ibid. 3.1.110). Finally, when he is told that certain bawdy songs are better than "your Scottish Iigges," he protests that "many of our Ladies delight much in the Scottish Musicke" (ibid. 3.1.160-162). The play's main character, a disguised Italian duke who takes on the satirical persona of the Fleer, makes one other reference to the Scots when, as part of a series of satirical quips about the English court, he observes that "your Ladyes cannot endure the old fashion Spurre, [...] but they loue the fine little Scottes spurre, it makes the Court Gennet curuet, curuet gallantly" (ibid. 2.1.148-151). Finally, the Fleer and another courtier joke about James' assumption of the title King of Great Britain, and perhaps his plan of union: the courtier asks, "[C]anst tell me if an Englishman were in debt, whether a Brittaine must pay it or no?" and, when the Fleer answers no, says, "I'me glad of that, I hope some honest statute will come shortlie, and wipe out all my scores" (ibid. 2.1.235-239). The passage plays on the widespread confusion about the legal status of Englishmen in the case that James' political union came about. A common objection of those

who opposed the union was that the different law codes of England and Scotland could not be feasibly reconciled. But the joke does not really comment on the proposed union and comes across as a ridiculous misunderstanding of what it would mean to change one's national identity. Even so, considering the specificity of the play's gibes at John Havelittle, it is very surprising that it was approved for performance or for publication. Christopher Petter hypothesizes that Sharpham revised the play before printing in order to remove specific anti-Scottish satire, but the internal evidence he cites is unconvincing (*The Works of Edward Sharpham* 234-236). Besides, the play as we have it contains plenty of potentially controversial material.

John Marston's *Parasitaster, or The Fawn*, contains nothing against the Scots, but one of its duke characters is sometimes thought by scholars to represent James. In the main plot of the play, Duke Hercules of Ferrara disguises himself as a courtier named Faunus in the court of a neighboring dukedom and uses flattery both to ingratiate himself with Duke Gonzago and to expose the duke's foolishness. The play offers an ironic critique of flattery that may be read as gently satirical advice to James, who, in his first speech to the English parliament, admitted his "infirmitie" of granting benefits too easily to importunate suitors (*The Kings Maiesties speech* D2v). Gonzago often speaks in turgid, trope-filled rhetoric, but at the end his first speech he echoes James' speech by saying "Plain meaning shunneth art: [...] We use no rhetoric" (Marston 1.2.186, 188). James' speech ends with the claim that "it becommeth a King, [...] to use no other Eloquence than plainnesse and sinceritie" (*The Kings Maiesties speech* D2v-D3r). This is an admittedly weak argument for identifying Gonzago with James, but the play was likely first performed only a little more than a year after James' accession to the English throne, and similarities like this one could easily have been noted. Another loosely topical aspect of the play

is Faunus' mockery of undue advancement, which appears in his ridiculous argument, designed to flatter Gonzago, that advancement is granted most royally when those advanced deserve it the least (Marston 3.1.303-307). Shortly thereafter, he implies that many of those who have recently been advanced were promoted for their flattery and not for any inherited nobility (ibid. 3.1.323-325). Most of these passages resemble ones discussed above that seem not to have resulted in any punishment, so, at this point, it is perhaps unsurprising that there is no evidence of the play's censorship. The play's possible caricature of James may seem potentially dangerous, considering that this was one of the main reasons for the suppression of the play about the Scottish mines, but Marston leaves out any specific details and makes no mention of the Scots.

Marston's 1605 play *The Dutch Courtesan* features a brief but notable instance of anti-Scottish satire. Its primary comic character, Cocledemoy, disguises himself as a Scottish barber to enter the vintner Mulligrub's house and steal his money. Although his assumed persona is never explicitly said to be Scottish, he makes it obvious when he announces that he will take on the accent of "a northern barber" (Marston 2.1.220) and states that he has been a barber for two years (Marston 2.3.22). Since the play was most likely first performed in 1605, he would have begun his supposed apprenticeship in 1603, the year James' reign began. Moreover, his assumed name is Andrew Shark, which combines the name of the patron saint of Scotland with a word meaning "a worthless and impecunious person who gains a precarious living by sponging on others, […] a parasite" ("Shark"). Like Sir John Havelittle in *The Fleer*, this caricature portrays Scottish courtiers as undeserving social climbers. In the name Andrew Shark, ambition

and beggarliness are linked with Scottishness, reflecting the cruel stereotypes that James sought to remove from public discourse in important places.

There is some evidence that *The Dutch Courtesan* caused some kind of scandal after its first performance. Janet Clare quotes Anthony Nixon's *The Black Year*, where Nixon "decries those playwrights who censure other men's works when 'their own are sacrificed in Paules Churchyard for bringing in *The Dutch Curtezan* to corrupt English conditions, and sent away *Westward* for carping both at Court, Cittie and country'" (Clare 139). Apparently, there may have been an incident in which copies of Marston's play were destroyed in the churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral, but I have found no other evidence of this. At several times during his reign, James ordered the burning of heterodox books at St. Paul's Cross, an open-air pulpit located on the north-east side of the churchyard, near London's bookshops. In doing this, James revived a practice sometimes used by pre-Elizabethan Tudor monarchs, such as Mary; Elizabeth suppressed the publication of some books but did not arrange public spectacles of book burning. Clare suggests that *The Dutch Courtesan* may have been destroyed because London's city council took offense at the play's portrayal of Master Mulligrub, who aspires to be an alderman (Clare 139). However, scholars of Jacobean press censorship have emphasized the way in which James used book burning as a kind of propaganda to signal official opprobrium toward ideas that conflicted with his own, and I have not encountered examples of book burning initiated by London city authorities. These burnings were sometimes accompanied by sermons describing and condemning the contents of the burned books. In fact, a book burning at St. Paul's Cross took place in the same year that *The Dutch Courtesan* was first performed. In a letter, John Chamberlain records that Edwin Sandys' *Europae Speculum*, published without Sandys' consent

as *A relation of the state of religion*, was burned on November 5, 1605, on the order of the High Commission, apparently at Sandys' request (Chamberlain 214). It seems that both James and the ecclesiastical court organized book burnings. The burned books mentioned by Cyndia Susan Clegg in her work on Jacobean press censorship mostly contained religious viewpoints that the Anglican orthodoxy considered heretical or political arguments that subordinated James' authority to the Pope's. According to Clegg, "James's principal motivation for burning a given book or group of books at Paul's Cross at a particular time was publicly to align himself with or to oppose a given ideological perspective and by doing so, enhance his own reputation" (Clegg 77). If *The Dutch Courtesan* was among the books burned at St. Paul's Cross, it was perhaps its portrayal of dissident religious views, rather than its anti-Scottish satire, that prompted authorities to burn it. The play's title character, along with her bawd and the Mulligrubs, belong to the extreme Protestant sect known as the Family of Love, which was condemned by James. In *Basilikon Doron*, he calls it "a vile sect amongst the Anabaptists," whose members "thinke themselues onely pure, and in a maner without sinne, the onely trwe Church, and onely worthy to be participant of the Sacraments, and all the rest of the world to be but abomination in the sight of God" (James VI and I A4v). Even if the play mocks the Family of Love, the mere fact that it presents Familist points of view may have been enough cause for James or another authority whose job was to uphold Anglican orthodoxy to publicly burn it. But this is all speculation. The play seems not to have been censored in dramatic performance, and, as far as I know, the text contains no evidence that the relatively inexplicit anti-Scottish satire was pared down at all. In fact, the play was twice performed at court during James' reign (Dutton 176).

When these instances of apparent non-censorship are compared with the examples of censorship discussed above, it is immediately evident how hard it is to make generalizations about state censors' motives in punishing playwrights and actors for dramatic satire. The three censored plays have in common derisive references to James as a king and to royal policies that relate to Scotland, yet other plays performed by the same company and for which there is no evidence of censorship contain similar references. Scholars have documented at length the material in these plays that criticizes royal policies and noted the special offensiveness of anti-Scottish satire, but I have not seen anyone observe that James used his authority to silence anti-Scottish prejudice on the stage in order to avoid alienating his native country's government and to protect the reputations of Scots in his retinue. I suspect that James' motives in these three cases were not very different from those that led him to punish Pigott. The anti-Scottish material in *The Fleer* and *The Dutch Courtesan* may have been inexplicit enough that James deemed them not worthy of censorship, though it is possible that the anti-Scottish satire of *The Dutch Courtesan* led him to burn copies of the play. One factor that I have not considered is the popularity of these plays among the playgoing public, which could have influenced James' censorship decisions. Perhaps an unpopular play warranted less punitive measures.

Samuel Daniel's *Philotas*

One of the incidents of attempted dramatic censorship examined here for which the most evidence is available is the accusation against Samuel Daniel of having represented the disgraced Earl of Essex in his play *Philotas*. While the play does not seem to have been censored in any substantial way, it prompted members of the Privy Council to question Daniel and may have

caused him to lose his position as Master of the Queen's Revels. The play demonstrates that English courtiers were carefully attuned to possible topical readings of drama and would use their political authority to prevent potential scandals.

The play was first performed at court during the winter of 1604/1605, nearly four years after Essex's attempted rebellion (Gazzard 424). The Calendar of State Papers does not record the date of Daniel's appearance before the Privy Council, but Daniel's references to dramatic performance in his letters to two of his accusers indicate that this performance, and not the publication of the play, got Daniel into trouble. His accusers (or whoever noticed the topical application of Daniel's play) must have been paying careful attention to the details of its political drama, as a basic summary of the play shows that it can easily stand as a kind of generalized warning against excessive ambition: Philotas, one of the highest-ranked and most popular courtiers in Alexander's court, hears about a conspiracy to murder Alexander, declares that he will report this news to Alexander, but then neglects to do so. When Alexander learns of the conspiracy from someone else and discovers that Philotas had been informed of it, he questions Philotas, who claims that he "held the rumour vaine to be" (Daniel l.867). Alexander maintains that Philotas' conduct was dangerous but forgives him. However, others in Alexander's court, led by Craterus, believe that Philotas is lying and convince Alexander to arraign him. A trial ensues, with Alexander as judge. Philotas' past critical remarks about Alexander are cited as evidence of treasonous intent. Despite his attempt to defend his honor, Philotas is convicted and tortured until he confesses to more crimes than he was accused of. It is never revealed whether Philotas is actually guilty or not.

Even a simple summary such as this shows that *Philotas*' plot differs significantly from the Essex affair, so it is perhaps surprising that Daniel was summoned to the Privy Council to explain the perceived resemblance between the two. The basic elements are there: in both cases a popular and generally successful courtier is condemned to death for treason against an heirless monarch. But most of the other details obviously differ, a fact which, at first glance, makes Daniel's self-defensive arguments seem plausible. These arguments are contained in three documents. Two are letters are to the politicians who likely called for Daniel's questioning before the Privy Council, the Earl of Devonshire, Charles Blount, and the Viscount Cranborne, Robert Cecil. The third is an "Apology" that Daniel appended to the 1623 edition of *Philotas* (based on internal evidence, this apology must have been written around the time the play came under suspicion). Daniel's "Apology" is unusual, since in virtually no other case did a playwright acknowledge the specific accusations of topical application that were made against their play.

In his letters to Blount and Cecil, Daniel provides two main arguments to absolve himself of blame. First, he makes the predictable claim that his play depicts universal human traits and not the particular vices of any individuals in government. He uses the fact that his play draws on ancient sources to try to lend some credibility to his argument. He writes to Cecil, "I ptest I have taken no other forme in personating the Acto^{r}s y^{t} pformd it, then the very Idea of those tymes, as they appeared vnto mee both by the cast of the storie and the vniuersall notions of the affayres of men, w^{c} in all ages beare the same resemblances" (*The Tragedy of Philotas* 38). Annabel Patterson observes that the use of classical history in early modern English drama simultaneously offered dramatists a way of disclaiming responsibility for their texts and invited the reader to consider the significance of adapting historical texts in light of present concerns (Patterson 57).

Like Daniel, Ben Jonson may have undergone questioning before the Privy Council after the 1603 court performance of *Sejanus*. The only record of this is in Drummond's notes on conversations he had with Jonson, which claim that Jonson was "accused both of popperie and treason" by the Earl of Northampton (Dutton 10). Scholars have speculated that Jonson was similarly commenting on the sudden disgraces of a courtier, usually either Essex or Walter Ralegh. But what is important here is the failure, in both cases, of the playwrights' shared strategy of avoiding suspicion. Perhaps the strategy did not fail completely, as both playwrights (Jonson, at least) seem to have escaped harsh punishment, but, to be sure, courtiers managed to detect topical applications of their plays.

Secondly, Daniel asserts that he had shown parts of the play to Blount and had secured the approval of the Master of the Revels before it was performed. Perhaps Daniel, despite his position in the queen's household, could not license his own plays, or, maybe, he sought the Master of the Revels' approval as an additional precaution. Either way, this defense highlights the Master of the Revels' understood role as providing the state's sanction for dramatic texts. Daniel tries to appropriate his authority to absolve himself of blame. The exact proceedings of Daniel's questioning are lost, so we cannot know whether Daniel's arguments won him any leniency. But in other cases the Master of the Revels was not held responsible for the performance of offensive drama, so it is unlikely that this claim helped Daniel.

In "The Apology," Daniel restates in greater detail the arguments used in the letters. He insists that his chief motive for writing the play was "the delight I tooke in the History it selfe as it lay" (Daniel 155) and that his play presents "the frailty of greatnesse, and the vsuall workings of ambition, the perpetuall subiects of books and Tragedies" (ibid. 156), just as an older play

about Philotas had done. At the end of the apology, Daniel argues that the perceived resemblance between Philotas and the Earl of Essex "can hold in no proportion but only in [Essex's] weaknesses, which I would wish all that loue his memory not to reuiue."

Scholars Lawrence Michel and Hugh Gazzard have amply documented the various parallels between the text of *Philotas* and multiple texts related to Essex and his treason trial. Though some commentators have been skeptical of the resemblance, the large amount of evidence suggests that Daniel did indeed write a play based on classical history to comment on contemporary affairs. Even though much of the play destabilizes the similarities between Philotas and Essex, which may reflect Daniel's effort to avoid any suspicion of resemblance, many of the detailed similarities are so peculiar as to have been hardly coincidental. I will not list all the evidence here but instead highlight the most important points. Firstly, Daniel had close connections to Essex and his followers, such as Mountjoy (Gazzard 428). He wrote approvingly of Essex in some of his poetry. Secondly, he uses source material written by Plutarch, who was admired for his *Parallel Lives*, a work that made associations between the lives of famous Greek and Roman men. Members of Essex's faction sometimes mentioned Plutarch when they made comparisons between political figures, and Essex himself drew political lessons out of Plutarch's writings, including his *Life of Alexander* (ibid. 429-430). Finally, there are multiple parallels between Daniel's Philotas and the Earl of Essex. Both were accused in court of writing letters that deny their monarch's divine right (ibid. 438). Daniel adds much to Philotas' trial that is not present in his main source, Quintus Curtius Rufus' *De rebus gestis Alexandri magni*. Daniel expands on Curtius' account, adding a series of questions from Philotas' prosecutors and responses from Philotas. Philotas' accusers emphasize both the large size of his faction and his

ingratitude for many favors granted by the king. Perhaps the most direct similarity is that both Essex and Philotas use the same phrase, "the half arch of my/thy house," to refer to the death of a brother at war (Essex used the phrase in *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex*) (ibid. 443-444).

Michel speculates about why Cecil and Blount would object to a play that seems to comment on the Essex affair. Both had been high-ranking courtiers in Elizabeth's court at the time of Essex's rebellion. Cecil had played a significant role in the prosecution against Essex. Blount had been an ally of Essex and joined him in his conspiracy, but had by then returned to favor at court (*The Tragedy of Philotas* 39). I suspect, as Michel has proposed, that Cecil saw the character of Craterus as an unfavorable representation of his role in Essex's prosecution (ibid. 40). This would help explain why Daniel's apology includes a skewed summary of the play that bizarrely flatters Craterus as "one of the most honest men that euer followed *Alexander* in all his actions." The text of the play does not support this interpretation of Craterus' character at all. He comes across as a scheming rival courtier who is eager to ruin Philotas' reputation. At one point, he argues that, even if Philotas is found not to be involved in the conspiracy against Alexander, torturing him "will force out some such thoughts of his, / As will vndoo him: for you seldome see / Such men arraign'd, that euer guiltlesse be" (Daniel ll.1103-1105). Even if Cecil had not seen himself personated in the play, he and Blount likely would have objected to dredging up the scandal on stage, whether at court or in the city, only a few years after it happened. Both had reputations to maintain. Cecil perhaps worried that the play would remind the public of his unpopular role in the trial, while Blount may have hoped to avoid reminding the court of his past mistakes. In the letter to Cecil, Daniel mentions the Earl of Northampton, Henry Howard, another former ally of Essex, who seems also to have objected to *Philotas*.

Yet it is ultimately unclear what Daniel's accusers hoped to accomplish by summoning Daniel to the Privy Council. Perhaps the cessation of performances of the play satisfied them, or it could be that they punished Daniel by removing him from his office as Master of the Queen's Revels. Apparently, they did not try to suppress the play in print, which Daniel offered to do himself. The two letters Daniel wrote reveal that he feared, more than anything else, damage to his reputation as a poet. In his letter to Blount, Daniel writes, "the world must, & shall know myne innocencie whilst I have a pen to shew it," and, "having bene knowne throughout all England for my virtue I will not leave a stayne of villanie vppon my name whatsoever error els might skape me vnfortunately thorow mine indiscreation, & misvnderstanding of the tyme" (Michel 38-39). Burt's understanding of early modern censorship as being not well distinguished from literary criticism may be applicable here. Daniel, far from being concerned about his freedom to publish his poetry without government interference, fears the moral opprobrium that the Privy Council can impose on him and his work. Perhaps this consideration, weighed against the risks of allowing the Essex controversy to be represented on the stage or in print, led Daniel's accusers to forbear from punishing him or suppressing the play.

George Chapman's *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron*

The play that, along with the satire about the Scottish mines, provoked one of the harshest responses from James was not a satirical comedy at all, but a tragedy based on then-recent French history. An apparently unlicensed performance of George Chapman's two-part play, *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron, Marshall of France*, prompted the king to shut down all theater companies in London for a few months. The play,

based on Edward Grimeston's 1607 *General Inventorie of the History of France*, focuses on the foiled attempt of Charles de Gontaut, Duke of Biron, to overthrow King Henri IV and establish himself as leader of an independent Burgundy. Chapman's choice of subject matter, a treasonous scandal in the royal court of an English ally, obviously made the play a risky endeavor. Biron had been executed only six years before the play's first performance, which occurred near the beginning of 1608.

The intervention of the French ambassador, Antoine Lefèvre de la Boderie, is what resulted in a punitive response from the English government. Most of the surviving information about the affair comes from De la Boderie's correspondence with French authorities. He records that he had prevented the actors from staging the plays but that they nevertheless did so while the court was away. He then complained to Robert Cecil, who ordered the arrest of the actors and the playwright, but only three actors were found. Since the play about the Scottish mines was already causing the king much vexation, he decided not to complain further, supposing that James would punish the actors enough. After James shut down all London theaters, De la Boderie explains, the acting companies offered a large amount of money to him in an attempt to get the ban lifted, but this would only happen on the condition that "they should no longer perform any modern histories nor speak of contemporary affairs on pain of death" (Dutton 183). A letter from Thomas Lake to Cecil mostly corroborates this account and indicates that James sought both to dissolve the Children of the Blackfriars and to punish the writer of the mines play. But Lake's letter implies that the company that performed the *Byron* plays was not the Children of the Blackfriars, whereas De la Boderie states that the same company performed both the mines play and the *Byron* plays. Dutton considers the possibility that another company first

performed the *Byron* plays, which were then transferred to the Blackfriars company (ibid. 184). (The title page of the play indicates that it was performed at the Blackfriars Theater.) Whatever the details of the situation were, it is clear that the plays offended the ambassador and James because they contained libellous representations of actual political figures.

According to these two correspondences, James' involvement in punishing the *Byron* scandal was rather limited, yet the scandal seems to have influenced his decision to close the theaters and forbid the performance of any "modern histories." As was the case for *Eastward Ho* and *Philotas*, members of court who were closely connected to the king collaborated in their attempt to punish offending dramatists/actors. And again, as in those cases, the punitive response quickly lost its power. James' intention to dissolve the Blackfriars company turned out to be short-lived, as the company resumed performances later in 1608 and even got invited to court in December (Clare 162). Chapman was never imprisoned, most likely due to the protection of the Duke of Lennox (Dutton 185-186). Just as attachment to patronage networks prevented Jonson and Chapman from suffering more than a brief imprisonment after the *Eastward Ho* scandal, it seems that Chapman found shelter with a patron of his in the case of the *Byron* plays.

The published text of the play attests to its censorship mainly in two places. Act four of *The Conspiracy* has been condensed and altered from its original version. In a single scene of 223 lines, two French nobles discuss Byron's embassy to England, on which he speaks to Queen Elizabeth. Additional cuts have been made to the second act of *The Tragedy*. As it is printed, the act consists of only 132 lines in which a masque is staged before the fictional French court. The mistress-slapping scene that De la Boderie complained about seems to have been among the cuts, since King Henry states, unintelligibly, that "This show hath pleased me well, for that it figures /

The reconcilement of my Queene and Mistris" (Chapman 2.1.129-130). No mistress is mentioned anywhere else in the text. Clearly, Chapman was displeased with the censorship these plays were subjected to, as he refers to them as "poore dismembred Poems" in the dedication of the printed text.

In a letter to whoever licensed the printed version of the *Byron* plays, most likely either Edmund Tilney or his successor, George Buck, Chapman exasperatedly argues that his plays should be published despite the scandal they caused in performance. He provides interesting details about the situation, including that the actors of the plays inserted lines that the recipient of the letter had crossed out. He writes that the Privy Council approved the play's performance three times. Perhaps the Master of the Revels, concerned about the play's content, referred the text to the Privy Council, or perhaps Chapman himself sought the Council's approval. Tilney would have understood that plays depicting the reigning French monarch had much potential to cause controversy. Presumably, the text approved by the council did not include the lines re-inserted by the actors, which probably comprised the mistress-slapping scene that so offended the ambassador. De la Boderie seems not to have been consulted when the Council deliberated over the plays' performance, since he writes that he managed to prevent further performances until the unlicensed one happened. To summarize, the Privy Council approved at least three performances of the plays, but, once the French ambassador discovered them, successfully sought to bar further performances. The playing company, which may or may not have been the Children of the Blackfriars, staged the plays anyway, and re-inserted lines that the censor had deemed unfit for performance. The episode reveals the specificity of early modern dramatic censorship. If high-ranking members of the English government detected dramatic material that

might insult a foreign dignitary, they might cut it out and license the rest of the play. Yet the intervention of an ambassador might move the government to change its original decision and disallow performances of the play. The fact that English relations with France were somewhat strained at this time likely also constituted a factor in the Council's decision to cancel performances, which will be discussed further below.

Whereas censorship was sometimes justified by the communal desire to extend Christian charity to people with faults, Chapman employs the same argument in his letter, claiming that the actions of whoever informed against him were "hartie, & secrett vengeances" and "more Politiqu[e] than Christian" (Gabel 266). He frames the censorship as an attack of "Illiterate Aucthoritie" on his own poverty, which necessitated the publication of the plays.

If passages that might have offended a foreign ally were unacceptable to English censors, certain references to the Earl of Essex in the *Byron* plays were tolerated by 1608. Even though Samuel Daniel had been summoned to the Privy Council four years earlier on account of suspicions that his *Philotas* inappropriately paralleled Essex's trial for treason, two of Chapman's references to Essex remain uncensored in the printed text of the *Byron* plays. As discussed above, *Philotas* makes no explicit link between the character Philotas and the Earl of Essex, yet the similarities between the two were enough to make English statesmen concerned. By contrast, *The Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* names Essex twice and compares him to Byron as another conniving overreacher. In act four, scene one, a captain tells Byron that the sudden death of his horses and pet duck foreshadow his inevitable fate. Byron answers,

> All these together are indeed ostentfull,
>
> Which by another like, I can confirme:

The matchlesse Earle of *Essex* who some make,

(In their most sure divinings of my death)

A parallell with me in life and fortune,

Had one horse like-wise that the very howre,

He sufferd death, (being well the night before)

Died in his pasture" (Chapman 4.1.131-138).

Then, in act five, scene three, after Byron has been sentenced to death, he again compares himself to Essex while hoping that King Henry IV will show mercy on him:

the Queene of *England*,

Told me that if the wilfull Earle of *Essex*,

Had vsd submission, and but askt her mercie,

She would haue giuen it, past resumption;

She (like a gratious Princesse) did desire

To pardon him: euen as she praid to God,

He would let doune a pardon vnto her;

He yet was guiltie, I am innocent:

He still refusd grace, I importune it" (ibid. 5.3.139-147).

The cuts to act IV of *The Conspiracy* apparently included Elizabeth's reference to Essex, as he is not mentioned there. This reference may have partly motivated the censor's cuts to the fourth act, along with its portrayal of Queen Elizabeth. Whether or not the impersonation of Elizabeth alone led to the decision to censor the act is unclear. Toward the end of Elizabeth's reign, Jonson had tried to include a dramatic representation of her in the epilogue of *Every Man Out of His Humour*, but

this was cut, even though she spoke no lines. However, by the time Chapman wrote the *Byron* plays, this prohibition may have changed. At least, we can conclude that writing a version of Elizabeth who states her opinion on the Earl of Essex and his rebellion was unacceptable to the censor.

The comparison made between Byron and Essex suggests that the play, like *Philotas*, aims to comment on Essex's rebellion and the state's response to it. However, Byron's own comparison between Elizabeth and Henry IV, quoted above, suggests that the play may instead comment on more contemporary politics, such that the French court of Henry IV stands for James' English court. Byron could offer a point of view on some other, more recently disgraced courtier. The play's significant references to English politics make it plausible, yet there is no evidence that the play's censors saw any particular courtier represented in the play.

Most commentators on James' response to the *Byron* plays take it for granted that James used so much severity because the plays insulted an English ally. As a representative of the interests of the French crown, De la Boderie certainly would have had reason to be concerned if the English court permitted an acting company to get away with brazen affronts to his employers. One of De la Boderie's responsibilities as ambassador would have been to uphold the dignity of the French royalty in England and inform French authorities of any disrespectful actions. Jean Hotman's 1603 diplomatic manual *The Ambassador* lists several categories of discourse that ought to be observed carefully and reported on. Hotman writes that, if the ambassador sees "the honour of his Maister defamed" "in full counsell of the Prince, or in the Pulpit by the Preachers, or on the Theater by stage players, or by writing or Lybels," he should "advertise him of it, and withall craue Iustice, and amends for the same, of those that ought to grant it unto him" (Hotman

G4v). Thus, by keeping an eye on theatrical performances in London, De la Boderie was fulfilling his prescribed diplomatic duty.

But the diplomatic situation between England and France merits further investigation. Ellen Welch discusses a diplomatic incident involving De la Boderie that happened only a few months before the *Byron* plays were first performed. In January of 1608, Ben Jonson's *The Masque of Beauty* was performed at the English court. Queen Anna failed to invite De la Boderie, and he took great offense at the slight. It was customary to invite all resident ambassadors to the revels in the English court, and events such as masques gave ambassadors important opportunities to show others in the audience the esteem that the hosting monarch reserved for their monarchs. To make matters worse, the Spanish ambassador with whom De la Boderie was competing for precedence received an invitation and attended the masque. When James invited De la Boderie to a private dinner to make up for his wife's negligence in not inviting him, De la Boderie refused, since it would not enable him to display himself and be honored before the public. In February, De la Boderie was invited to another royal masque, but the rift between the ambassador and his hosts was not fully mended until James invited him to the *Masque of Queens* a year later. What made this masque special was the personal attention James lavished on De la Boderie at a public spectacle. The initial diplomatic incident that strained relations between the French court and James casts the harsh state response to Chapman's plays in a new light. *The Conspiracy and Tragedy of Charles Duke of Byron* were first performed near the beginning of 1608, right around the time *The Masque of Beauty* was performed. The tensions that resulted from the queen's failure to invite De la Boderie to court festivities likely influenced James and Cecil in their responses to the *Byron* scandal. Both men

had a significant role in ensuring that De la Boderie was shown the proper amount of respect in the English court, and a severe punishment for the offending actors and dramatist in the case of the *Byron* plays would help to demonstrate that the English court valued the French ambassador's concerns. It would also help mitigate the fallout from the scandal. Incidentally, Chapman may have used his own connections to the French ambassador to avoid the punishment intended for him. The Duke of Lennox, who gave shelter to Chapman while Cecil sought his arrest, was an ally of De la Boderie and first informed him of the queen's failure to invite him to *The Masque of Beauty* (Welch 41). This is only speculation, but it may be that the influence of Chapman's patron served Chapman especially well because of his friendship with the ambassador.

Conclusion

The unusually controversial repertoire of the Children of the Blackfriars offers a unique set of texts with which to study state censorship in early modern England, beyond the role of the Master of the Revels. Whether because Daniel, as licenser, failed to anticipate the court's reaction to certain passages, or because these dramatists sought to appeal to audiences with risky topical references, the Children of the Blackfriars found themselves at the center of at least five controversies in as many years at the beginning of James' reign. Scholars have noted the complex circumstances under which the performance of each of these plays was censored by James and the Privy Council, but I propose that a persuasive understanding of the political goals involved in these cases of dramatic censorship has not yet been reached. With regard to anti-Scottish satire and Chapman's controversial dramatization of contemporary French scandals,

I have tried to show that James' political concerns at the time were such that they may have strongly influenced his punitive responses to the plays. Personal grievances may have had some part in his decisions to suppress plays and imprison actors and dramatists, but this tells us little about the ways in which he and government officials interpreted the drama. A focus on political motives allows us to see how authorities sought to control the theater not in order to stifle all criticism of the government, but to limit speech that was seen to threaten the reputations of some of the government's agents. For James and his councillors, dramatic censorship, rather than just a matter of offended egos, was an attempt to mediate between many competing interests and anticipate the responses of audience members at multiple levels of society, including foreign dignitaries who only heard reports of performances. When critics ignore the complex interplay of interests within and without the English court that influenced the censorship of this drama, they risk unintentionally reinforcing the assumptions about early modern censorship that the revisionist approach aims to test. In order to take into account what was at stake for monarchs, courtiers, diplomats, dramatists, and others involved in dramatic censorship, we have to interrogate the motives of early modern censors more carefully.

In the introduction to *Press Censorship in Jacobean England*, Cyndia Clegg articulates an approach to studying early modern censorship that comes close to what I recommend in this essay. Her contention that "[a] study of press censorship in Jacobean England [...] cannot be separated from a study of Jacobean political culture" needs to be extended to the study of dramatic censorship. If we are to assess the purposes of this censorship accurately, we need to consider the different perspectives and goals of many government officials in relation to a wide variety of plays. The similarities and differences between press licensing and dramatic licensing

ought to be examined further so as to interpret better the textual evidence of censored plays. Patronage networks, which, as we have seen, served to mitigate dramatists' punishments, also need to be considered. In short, the analysis of dramatic censorship needs to be integrated into the political history of the period. Such an approach would provide new insights into the relationship between the English court and the theater and help us understand how this relationship changed over time.

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